United Nations S/2016/293

Security Council

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United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling the arms embargo, travel ban, assets freeze and measures concerning illicit oil exports which were imposed and modified by resolutions 1970 (2011), 1973 (2011), 2009 (2011), 2040 (2012), 2095 (2013), 2144 (2014), 2146 (2014), 2174 (2014) and 2213 (2015) (the Measures), and that the mandate of the Panel of Experts established by paragraph 24 of resolution 1973 (2011) and modified by resolutions 2040 (2012), 2146 (2014) and 2174 (2014) was extended until 30 April 2016 by resolution 2213 (2015),

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya,

Recalling resolution 2259 (2015) which welcomed the signing of the 17 December 2015 Libyan Political Agreement of Skhirat, Morocco and endorsed the Rome Communiqué of 13 December 2015 to support the Government of National Accord as the sole legitimate government of Libya, that should be based in Tripoli, and *further expressing* its determination in this regard to support the Government of National Accord,

Welcoming the meeting of the Libyan Political Dialogue on 10 March 2016, which reaffirmed its commitment to uphold the Libyan Political Agreement,

Underlining the primary responsibility of the Government of National Accord in taking appropriate action to prevent the illicit export of crude oil from Libya and *reaffirming* the importance of international support for Libyan sovereignty over its territory and resources,

Expressing its concern that the illicit export of crude oil from Libya undermines the Government of National Accord and poses a threat to the peace, security and stability of Libya,

Expressing support to Libyan efforts to resolve peacefully the disruptions of Libya's energy exports and reiterating that control of all facilities should be transferred back to the proper authorities,

Further reiterating its concern about activities which could damage the integrity and unity of Libyan State financial institutions and the National Oil Corporation, *highlighting* the importance of these institutions continuing to function for the benefit of all Libyans, and *stressing* the need for the Government of National

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Accord to exercise sole and effective oversight over the National Oil Corporation, the Central Bank of Libya, and the Libyan Investment Authority as a matter of urgency, without prejudice to future constitutional arrangements pursuant to the Libyan Political Agreement,

Further recalling resolution 2259 (2015) which called on Member States to cease support to and official contact with parallel institutions claiming to be the legitimate authority, but which were outside the Libyan Political Agreement, as specified by it,

Recalling that international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982, sets out the legal framework applicable to activities in the ocean,

Reaffirming the importance of holding accountable those responsible for violations or abuses of human rights or violations of international humanitarian law, including those involved in attacks targeting civilians and *stressing* the need to transfer detainees to State authority,

Reiterating its expression of support for the Government of National Accord, as stated in paragraph 3 of resolution 2259 (2015), and *noting* in this regard the specific requests made to the Government of National Accord in this resolution,

Reiterating its request that all Member States fully support the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and work with the Libyan authorities and United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to develop a coordinated package of support to build the capacity of the Government of National Accord, in line with Libyan priorities and in response to requests for assistance,

Determining that the situation in Libya continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

Prevention of Illicit Oil Exports

1. *Decides* to extend until 31 July 2017 the authorizations provided by and the measures imposed by resolution 2146 (2014);

2. *Condemns* attempts to illicitly export crude oil from Libya, including by parallel institutions which are not acting under the authority of the Government of National Accord;

3. *Requests* that the Government of National Accord appoint and notify the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) of a focal point responsible for communication with the Committee with respect to the measures in resolution 2146 (2014), and to inform the Committee of any vessels transporting crude oil illicitly exported from Libya, and *urges* the Government of National Accord to provide regular updates to inform the Committee on ports, oil fields, and installations that are under its control, and to inform the Committee about the mechanism used to certify legal exports of crude oil;

4. *Calls on* the Government of National Accord, on the basis of any information regarding such exports or attempted exports, to expeditiously contact the concerned vessel's flag State, in the first instance, to resolve the issue and *directs* the Committee to immediately inform all relevant Member States about

notifications to the Committee from the Government of National Accord's focal point regarding vessels transporting oil illicitly exported from Libya;

Effective Oversight of the Financial Institutions

5. *Requests* that the Government of National Accord confirm to the Committee as soon as it exercises sole and effective oversight over the National Oil Corporation, the Central Bank of Libya, and the Libyan Investment Authority;

Arms Embargo

6. *Requests* the Government of National Accord to appoint a focal point to brief the Committee at its request and provide information relevant to the Committee's work on the structure of the security forces under its control, the infrastructure in place to ensure the safe storage, registration, maintenance and distribution of military equipment by the Government security forces, and training needs, and *emphasizes* the importance of the Government of National Accord exercising control over and safely storing arms, with the support of the international community;

7. Affirms that the Government of National Accord may submit requests under paragraph 8 of resolution 2174 (2014) for the supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel, including related ammunition and spare parts, for the use by security forces under its control to combat ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, also known as Da'esh), groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIL, Ansar Al Sharia, and other, groups associated with Al-Qaida operating in Libya, *calls upon* the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 24 of resolution 1970 (2011) to consider expeditiously such requests, and *affirms* the Security Council's readiness to consider reviewing the arms embargo, when appropriate;

8. *Urges* Member States to assist the Government of National Accord, upon its request, by providing it with the necessary security and capacity-building assistance, in response to threats to Libyan security and in defeating ISIL, groups that have pledged allegiance to ISIL, Ansar Al Sharia, and other groups associated with Al-Qaida operating in Libya;

9. *Urges* the Government of National Accord to improve further the monitoring and control of arms or related materiel that are supplied, sold or transferred to Libya in accordance with paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011) or paragraph 8 of resolution 2174 (2014), including through the use of end user certificates issued by the Government of National Accord, *requests* the Panel of Experts established by paragraph 24 of resolution 1973 (2011) to consult with the Government of National Accord about the safeguards needed to safely procure and secure arms and related materiel, and *urges* Member States and regional organizations to provide assistance to the Government of National Accord upon its request to strengthen the infrastructure and mechanisms currently in place to do so;

10. *Calls upon* the Government of National Accord to improve the implementation of the arms embargo, including at all entry points, as soon as it exercises oversight, and *calls upon* all Member States to cooperate in such efforts;

Asset Freeze

11. *Reaffirms* its intention to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 1970 (2011) shall at a later stage be made available to and for the benefit of the Libyan people and taking note of the letter circulated as document S/2016/275, *affirms* the Security Council's readiness to consider changes, when appropriate, to the asset freeze at the request of the Government of National Accord;

Panel of Experts

12. *Decides* to extend until 31 July 2017 the mandate of the Panel of Experts (the Panel), established by paragraph 24 of resolution 1973 (2011) and modified by resolutions 2040 (2012), 2146 (2014) and 2174 (2014), and *decides* that the Panel's mandated tasks shall remain as defined in resolution 2213 (2015);

13. *Decides* that the Panel shall provide to the Council an interim report on its work no later than 180 days after the Panel's appointment, and a final report to the Council, after discussion with the Committee, no later than 15 June 2017 with its findings and recommendations;

14. *Urges* all States, relevant United Nations bodies, including UNSMIL, and other interested parties, to cooperate fully with the Committee and the Panel, in particular by supplying any information at their disposal on the implementation of the Measures decided in resolutions 1970 (2011), 1973 (2011), 2146 (2014) and 2174 (2014), and modified in resolutions 2009 (2011) and 2040 (2012), 2095 (2013), 2144 (2014) and 2213 (2015) and in this resolution, in particular incidents of non-compliance, and *calls on* UNSMIL and the Government of National Accord to support Panel investigatory work inside Libya, including by sharing information, facilitating transit and granting access to weapons storage facilities, as appropriate;

15. *Calls upon* all parties and all States to ensure the safety of the Panel's members, and *further calls upon* all parties and all States, including Libya and countries of the region, to provide unhindered and immediate access, in particular to persons, documents and sites the Panel deems relevant to the execution of its mandate;

16. *Affirms* its readiness to review the appropriateness of the Measures contained in this resolution, including the strengthening, modification, suspension or lifting of the Measures, and its readiness to review the mandate of UNSMIL and the Panel, as may be needed at any time in light of developments in Libya;

17. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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Security Council

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8 April 2016
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Identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/272).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms the positions that it has previously communicated in its identical letters addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council responding to the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015). It would also like to stress the following points:

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic notes that, for the first time, the authors of the report have adopted a more objective approach to their treatment of certain aspects of the human rights situation in Syria. Nevertheless, the Syrian Government finds it deplorable that the Secretariat, in an attempt to appease certain parties on the Security Council, continues to take a dim view of the successes achieved by the Syrian Government — in conjunction with its national partners, the United Nations and international organizations operating in Syrian territory — in delivering humanitarian assistance to a number of regions, including several that are unstable. Those successes could not have been achieved without the close cooperation and facilities provided by the Syrian Government.

2. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic also deplores the fact that, five years after the onset of the crisis in Syria, the Secretariat persists in ignoring the terrorist war being waged against Syria with foreign support and failing to mention it in its monthly reports. The Syrian Government reiterates its rejection of the attempts made by the United Nations Secretariat and certain Western States on the Security Council to deny the right of States, under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to defend themselves, their people and their territory from terrorism and aggression. Such attempts are evident in paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Secretary-General's report. It would be preferable for the Secretariat to speak positively and clearly about the successes achieved in the war against foreign-backed terrorism by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies, which have liberated numerous regions of Syrian territory where armed terrorist groups had been active and broken the siege that the terrorists had imposed on Nubul, Zahra' and other towns in Aleppo, Dar'a, Homs, Hama and Ladhiqiyah governorates. Those successes have opened the way

for displaced persons to return to their areas and homes, and reduced the number of Syrian refugees fleeing their regions because of terrorism perpetrated by armed terrorist groups.

3. The Syrian Government reiterates its rejection of the Secretariat's reliance in its reports on unreliable sources of information. In so doing, the Secretariat has followed the example of other United Nations entities, such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which takes its information on Syria from such sources, including the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and Doctors without Borders, both of which are well known for their links to Western intelligence services. In the current report, the Secretariat has gone so far as to rely on what it calls "open sources". The Syrian Government deplores the Secretariat's failure to distinguish between counter-terrorism activities and terrorist acts. This is a clear indication that the Secretariat shares the bias of those sources of information, whose aim is to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government and its allies and undermine their counter-terrorism efforts (paragraphs 5, 6 and 15).

4. The Syrian Government reiterates that it continues to reject the insistence of Secretariat officials on applying the term "non-State armed groups" to such terrorist organizations as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Nusrah Front, Al-Qaida and associated groups that receive support and funding from a number of foreign Governments, notably those of Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions concerning counter-terrorism and the Charter of the United Nations. We have every right to ask once again: what is the Secretariat's legal basis for using that term, when several paragraphs of the report itself note that those groups have targeted and killed dozens of peaceable civilians (paragraphs 7, 10 and 15)?

5. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on dialogue among Syrians under Syrian leadership and without preconditions. It further stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all of the armed terrorist groups active in Syria have been eradicated. In that connection, the Syrian Government reminds the Secretariat that the Geneva meetings are meant to lead to a political solution, not a political transition. It furthermore reminds the Secretariat that the success of those meetings and any significant improvement in the humanitarian situation will depend, above all, on creating a climate conducive to a serious and non-politicized international and regional commitment to fighting terrorism and on an immediate end to the unilateral coercive economic measures being imposed on the Syrian people with no legal or moral basis.

6. The Syrian Government reiterates that it utterly rejects the Secretariat's bias, which is clearly evident in the report, against the support that the Russian Federation has provided, at the request of the Syrian Government, to Syria in its war against armed terrorist groups and individuals and their supply lines. The Syrian Government also reiterates its rejection of the Secretariat's attempts to equate the counter-terrorism efforts of the Syrian Arab Armed Forces and the Russian Air Force with the aerial bombardment being carried out by the so-called international coalition led by the United States, in violation of international law and, specifically, of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly given that the operations of the above-mentioned coalition have caused the deaths of scores of civilians and large-scale destruction of infrastructure in Syria.

7. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has fulfilled its national and international commitments through actions rather than words. It has facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all affected Syrian citizens and those with a similar status across the country. At the same time, the Syrian Government finds it odd that the Secretariat should attempt to justify the Turkish regime's refusal since 27 December 2015 to allow humanitarian assistance to pass through the Nusaybin crossing in Hasakah governorate, which has had a negative impact on delivery of assistance to affected individuals in that governorate.

8. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is surprised by the claim in paragraph 29 of the report that 58 inter-agency convoy requests have been submitted as of February 2016. Memorandum No. 29 of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Syria, dated 10 January 2016, mentions requests regarding 32 locations for implementation in the first quarter of 2015. It also states that 14 requests from 2015 remain pending and due for implementation in 2016. That would bring the total number of requests submitted by the United Nations to 46, rather than 58 as stated in the report under consideration.

9. The Syrian Government wishes to clarify that, in February 2016, it responded to 14 requests for joint convoys to the following areas: Dayr al-Zawr; Kafraya and Fu'ah in Idlib governorate; Madaya, Zabadani, Bludan, Tall, Mu'addamiyah and Kafr Batna in Rif Dimashq governorate; Wa'r in Homs governorate; and Sabburah and Harbnafsah in Hama governorate. On 9 March 2016, it approved United Nations requests to send humanitarian assistance convoys to the following areas: the western and eastern countryside of Aleppo city; I'zaz and Afrin in Aleppo governorate; the Rastan, Talbisah, Hula, Tir Ma'lah, Ghantu, Darah al-Kabirah and Wa'r areas in Homs governorate; and Yalda, Babila, Bayt Saham and Tall in Rif Dimashq. The Syrian Government requested the United Nations to send joint humanitarian assistance convoys to the following areas: Nubul and Zahra', the villages of Hadir, Wadihi, Azzan, Abtin, Tall 'Aran, Tall Hasil, Al-Madinah al-Sina'iyah, Shaykh Najjar, Shaykh Zayyat and Kafr Saghir in Aleppo governorate; the Jayrud, Damir, Bludan and Tall areas in Rif Dimashq governorate; and Tadmur (Palmyra) and Qaryatayn in Homs governorate. The Syrian Government stresses that the United Nations must act on those approvals within the specified time frames and refrain from fabricating excuses for failure to implement such requests.

10. On 23 March 2016, in its response to the April 2016 plans of both the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Syrian Government gave approval for the United Nations, ICRC and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to deliver humanitarian assistance to Madaya, Zamalka, Arbin, Zabdin and Kafr Batna in Rif Dimashq governorate; Kafraya and Fu'ah in Idlib governorate; the eastern part of Aleppo city; and Talbisah and Rastan in Homs governorate. The Syrian Government stresses the need for coordination in respect of determining the numbers of persons in need in those areas. With regard to Mu'addamiyah, Duma, eastern Harasta and Darayya, we will complete our review as quickly as possible in the light of the sensitive security conditions in those areas and the presence of armed terrorist organizations, including ISIL and the Nusrah Front, that pose a direct threat to United Nations, ICRC and Syrian Arab Red Crescent teams that will be delivering assistance to those areas. We draw your attention to the report from the Russian Ministry of Defence about armed groups opening fire on humanitarian assistance convoys in the towns of Harasta in Rif Dimashq and Kafr Nan in Homs governorate. Syria also strongly condemns the insistence by certain States that support terrorism on delivering assistance to Darayya, where there are only terrorists.

11. The Syrian Government rejects the Secretariat's attempts to equivocate regarding the so-called besieged areas, notably by inflating or downplaying the numbers of inhabitants in those areas according to its whims and motives. In its responses to the reports of the Secretary-General since August 2015, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has pointed out that the number of people besieged in Dayr al-Zawr was 300,000 rather than 200,000 as claimed by the United Nations, while the number of persons besieged in Fu'ah and Kafraya was 35,000, not 12,500. The Syrian Government notes that Duma and Darayya are hubs for such armed terrorist groups as ISIL and the Army of Islam. The Government is willing to consider the delivery of assistance to Duma. However, Darayya has been emptied of its inhabitants, who have fled to Mu'addamiyah. In that regard, paragraphs 39 and 43 of the report confirm what the Syrian Government has consistently maintained about conditions in certain areas classified by the United Nations as "besieged". Those paragraphs not only confirm that there was no evident sign of malnutrition and that access to food was not a problem in those areas, but also report violations being committed by the armed terrorist groups in those areas, including the recruitment and arming of children.

12. The Syrian Government is surprised that the Secretariat is once again referring to the siege of Yarmouk camp and putting the numbers involved at 6,000 people. This is a fatuous idea, and there is no justification for including it in such reports. The report itself indicates that some people in Yarmouk could go and receive assistance in Yalda (paragraph 38). How can it be a besieged area when the inhabitants can come and go into the adjacent Yalda area? We should like to note that from 2014 to February 2016, a total of 123,783 parcels of food aid had been delivered to the inhabitants of the camp. We also note that the Palestine refugees in Yalda, Babila and Bayt Saham are inhabitants of Yarmouk camp who were displaced from the camp after the terrorist organization ISIL overran it in April 2015 in collusion with the terrorist Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups present inside the camp. Over the last few months, those groups have seized large quantities of assistance intended for Palestine refugees in the areas in question.

13. The Syrian Government cannot accept the claims that the delivery of medical assistance is being hindered. It is astonished that the report fails to provide updated information on medical assistance. Since the beginning of 2016, the Syrian Government has approved seven World Health Organization (WHO) requests to deliver medical assistance to the following governorates and regions: Duma in Rif Dimashq; Raqqah governorate; Ayn al-Arab, Shaddadah and Ra's al-Ayn in Hasakah governorate; Yabrud, Assal al-Ward, Bayt Sawa, Kafr Batna, Arbin, Zamalka, Zabadin and Maliha in Rif Dimashq governorate; Idlib governorate; Jandaris, Raju, Shiran, Sirrin and Dayr Hafir in Aleppo governorate; Rastan, Talbisah, Qaryatayn, Tadmur (Palmyra) and Taldu in Homs governorate; Qal'at al-Madiq, Ziyarah, Kafr Zayta, Murak, Suran and Si'in in Hama governorate; and Karamah, Ayn Isa and Suluk in Raqqah governorate. Paragraphs 26, 39, 47 and 48 of the report note that WHO was able to deliver medical assistance to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries, including those who are in hotspots. In that regard, the Syrian Government recalls that it had requested WHO to provide information on how medical assistance was delivered to Hasakah city, Hawl, Shaddadah and Markadah in Hasakah governorate, and to Mayadin, Albukamal, Sur and Kasrah in Dayr al-Zawr governorate. However, the Syrian Government has not yet received any response from WHO.

14. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its position that cross-border assistance is futile, and condemns once more the Secretariat's insistence on

covering up the lack of transparency on the part of the United Nations with regard to such assistance. The notifications being sent to the Syrian Government still contain inaccurate figures, information, numbers of beneficiaries and particulars on which parties collect aid to distribute it to civilian recipients. The Syrian Government is surprised at the claim in paragraph 23 that no reports were received of any convoys being refused or found to be irregular. This claim is an attempt to cover up the major problems that beset the delivery of cross-border assistance from Turkey and other countries, and to gloss over Turkey's deliberate refusal to allow the passage of a significant amount of assistance through the Nusaybin crossing in Hasakah governorate.

15. The Syrian Government also reiterates that the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism is unable to confirm the delivery of cross-border assistance to beneficiaries. As a result, the Syrian Government has no way of knowing how and by whom humanitarian assistance is being distributed. What is certain is that cross-border assistance is finding its way into the hands of the armed terrorists, or that they are appropriating it, distributing some of it to their members and selling the rest at exorbitant prices on the black market. It is imperative that the members of the Security Council know that the Turkish regime and its intelligence agencies continue to use cross-border humanitarian assistance convoys to smuggle weapons to the armed terrorist groups active in Syria.

16. The Syrian Government reiterates its position regarding the need to cooperate with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the primary partner for United Nations relief activities in Syrian territory, in the distribution of assistance brought in across the border. That approach would ensure that the aid reaches civilians affected by the crisis in Syria and does not fall into the hands of armed terrorist groups. In January 2016, the Syrian Government approved the United Nations request to entrust the Syrian Arab Red Crescent with receiving and distributing cross-border assistance.

17. The number of foreign non-governmental organizations authorized to operate in Syria is 20, not 16 as stated in the report of the Secretary-General. The Syrian Government is surprised at the Secretariat's failure to update the relevant information. It reiterates its requests to the United Nations offices in Damascus to check their information and to submit objective reports, particularly to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

18. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to compel those States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to desist from providing any form of support and funding to those groups, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism and the financing of terrorism, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex I to the identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Crimes committed by ISIL, the Nusrah Front, the Free Army, the Army of Islam, the Army of Conquest and other armed terrorist groups ignored by the authors of the report

In the period 21 January to 21 February 2016, terrorists killed 367 civilians, including 25 children, and injured 776 civilians, including 92 children, across the governorates of Syria, not including Raqqah and Idlib.

On 21 February, the terrorist organization ISIL detonated a Toyota vehicle using a large quantity of highly explosive materials. The vehicle was detonated in a densely populated popular market in Sayyidah Zaynab city in Rif Dimashq governorate. Two other blasts followed; the first involved a gas cylinder, and the second was set off by a suicide bomber who detonated an explosive belt in the midst of civilians who had come to the aid of those injured by the first blast. The three terrorist blasts killed over 85 civilians and injured hundreds more, most of them children, women and elderly people. Serious material damage was caused to property and infrastructure.

On 21 February, the terrorist organization ISIL detonated two car bombs in quick succession in the Zahra' neighbourhood of Homs city. More than 47 people were killed and over 110 others were injured, most of them in critical condition. Significant material damage was caused to property and infrastructure.

On 8 and 9 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front fired mortar shells at Qardahah city and Bishalama village in Ladhiqiyah governorate, killing three civilians and injuring five others. Material damage was caused.

On 10 February, a terrorist detonated a car bomb in front of the main gate of the Police Officers Club in the Masakin Barzah area in Damascus governorate, killing one civilian and injuring another civilian and a child. Material damage was caused.

On 10 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the Nusrah Front fired mortar shells at Dar'a city, killing and injuring civilians, and causing material damage. On 14 February, that same group fired mortar shells at Dar'a city, killing one girl and injuring 12 civilians, including women and children. Material damage was caused.

On 10 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam and the Nusrah Front fired mortar shells at the Assad suburb in Harasta, Rif Dimashq governorate, killing and injuring five civilians.

On 14 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Army of Islam, the Nusrah Front and the Rahman Corps located in Darayya fired mortar shells at Sahnaya town in Rif Dimashq, killing two civilians and injuring 12 others, including women and children. Material damage was caused.

On 14 February, in Subayhah village, Aleppo governorate, armed terrorist groups, which some consider to be the moderate armed opposition, fired rockets at Safirah city, killing one boy and one girl and injuring three civilians, including one woman and one child. Material damage was caused.

On 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bustan al-Basha, Amiriyah, Sayf al-Dawlah, Old City, Rashidin and Bani Zayd neighbourhoods of Aleppo city carried out sniper attacks and fired gas cylinders and mortar shells at the Sulayman al-Halabi, Salah al-Din, A'zamiyah, Maydan, Aziziyah, Jam'iyat al-Zahra', Halab al-Jadidah and Ashrafiyah neighbourhoods, killing six civilians and injuring 45 others. Material damage was caused.

On 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 February, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called Nusrah Front, the Nur al-Din al-Zanki battalion, the Islamic Front, Liwa' al-Tawhid, the Badr Martyrs Brigade, the Emigrants Brigade and Northern Shield located in the Bustan al-Qasr, Bustan al-Basha, Mashhad, Old City, Bani Zayd, Rashidin and Halluk neighbourhoods of Aleppo city directed bullets and sniper fire and fired gas cylinders and mortar shells at the Halab al-Jadidah, Shahba' al-Qadimah, Sayf al-Dawlah, A'zamiyah, Meridian, Sulayman al-Halabi, Fayd, Tishrin Street, Barun Street, Shaykh Maqsud, Sulaymaniyah, Jam'iyat al-Zahra' and Jamiliyah neighbourhoods, killing 17 civilians and injuring 100 others, including women and children. Material damage was caused during that period.

On 23 and 24 February, in Dayr al-Zawr, armed terrorist groups belonging to the so-called ISIL terrorist organization fired mortar shells at the Thawrah, Qusur and Harabish neighbourhoods, killing one civilian and one girl and injuring 14 others. Material damage was caused. On 26, 27, 28 and 29 February, similar terrorist attacks carried out by ISIL against the Thawrah, Qusur, Harabish and Muwazzafin neighbourhoods killed three children and four civilians, including one woman. Fourteen civilians, including one child, were injured, and material damage was caused.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Examples of humanitarian assistance that was delivered during January 2016 thanks to the facilitation provided by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations and other international organizations, in cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Also listed is assistance delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid and medical assistance), provided from inside Syrian territory by United Nations organizations, to various governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Aleppo, Qunaytirah, Hasakah, Homs, Hama and Dar'a, but not to Raqqah or Dayr al-Zawr governorates. Some 1,844,790 Syrian beneficiaries (368,958 families) received food parcels provided by the World Food Programme through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. Some 443,005 beneficiaries (88,601 families) received food parcels provided by the United Nations through national non-governmental organizations. The total number of the beneficiaries of United Nations assistance distributed from inside Syrian territory thus stands at 2,287,795 (457,559 families). The above-mentioned assistance was distributed by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to the governorates as follows: 64,746 parcels in Rif Dimashq; 18,022 parcels in Dar'a and its countryside; 2,360 parcels in Qunaytirah and its countryside; 4,000 in Idlib; 52,000 parcels in Aleppo and its countryside; 7,522 parcels in Hasakah; 43,546 parcels in Hama and its countryside; and 63,155 parcels in Homs and its countryside.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid provided by ICRC from inside Syrian territory to most governorates, including Rif Dimashq, Idlib, Dayr al-Zawr, Qunaytirah, Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Idlib. A total of 129,375 food parcels were delivered, in addition to 37,112 canned food parcels and food aid for community kitchens. A total of 2,913 food parcels provided by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies were distributed in Homs, Damascus, Rif Dimashq and Aleppo governorates.

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered humanitarian aid (food and non-food aid, medical assistance and water purifiers) provided by United Nations organizations and seven foreign non-governmental organizations operating in Syria to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries in Aleppo, Rif Dimashq, Dar'a, Qunaytirah, Damascus, Homs, Hama, Suwayda', Tartus and Ladhiqiyah governorates.

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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

We write today to reiterate our strong condemnation of the campaign of murder and aggression of Israel, the occupying Power, in particular its continued practice of extrajudicial killings against Palestinian civilians, particularly youth, held captive under its brutal occupation in the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. While Israel's illegal policy of extrajudicial killings, most carried out execution-style, have been incessant throughout its nearly five-decade-long occupation, this illegal practice has been on the rise since October 2015, when the occupying Power stepped up its aggression against the Palestinian people. Such unlawful attacks, which amount to war crimes and indicate an abject disdain for the worth of Palestinian lives, have further ignited an already extremely tense situation on the ground.

In this connection, we wish to add to the record of Israeli war crimes the gruesome killing of two young Palestinians, Ramzi Qasrawi and Abdul Fattah al-Sharif, both age 21, who were killed in the Tal Rumeida neighbourhood in Al-Khalil by Israeli occupying forces on the morning of 24 March 2016. A video captured by a field worker from the Israeli human rights group B'Tselem shows two bodies lying on the ground after being shot. The video shows the body of Abdul Fattah lying on the ground after being shot as occupying forces and medical teams walk around his body, providing no medical assistance, while Palestinian ambulances were blocked from reaching the area. Minutes later, the video shows a well-known terrorist settler asking an Israeli soldier, who is also a so-called medic, if "the dog is dead" and, if he is not dead, to "shoot him in the head". The Israeli soldier obliges and shoots him in the head at point-blank range.

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The video clearly shows that Abdul Fattah was disarmed and not posing a threat to anyone, proving that the occupying Power has carried out yet another extrajudicial execution. Abhorrently, a third video shows the Israeli soldier who shot Abdul Fattah in the head shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries with another well-known extreme illegal settler from Al-Khalil as if nothing happened. This only further displays the level of moral corruption that exists throughout the ranks of the Israeli occupying forces as well as the entrenched and utter disdain for Palestinian life.

We recall the recent remarks by the Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme at Amnesty International, who stated in a recent press release that "the shooting of a wounded and incapacitated person, even if they have been involved in an attack, has absolutely no justification and must be prosecuted as a potential war crime". He went on to state, "Israeli forces have a long history of carrying out unlawful killings — including extrajudicial executions — in the Occupied Palestinian Territories with impunity." It is in this connection and following the recently released video footage providing evidence of Israeli war crimes that the Palestinian leadership has formally requested that the United Nations initiate an official investigation into Israeli extrajudicial killings of Palestinian civilians. The request calls for the investigation not only of the execution of Abdul Fattah but of all other extrajudicial killings carried out by the Israeli occupying forces since the beginning of this most recent aggression since October 2015.

At the same time, we must highlight that after the heinous act of the extrajudicial execution of Abdul Fattah, Israeli government officials have been vulgarly vying with each other as to who is more in support of the Israeli soldier that committed this latest war crime, with some officials even calling him a hero in a clear example of official encouragement and effective impunity. Such clear examples of incitement are exactly what allow Israeli occupying forces and illegal settlers alike to commit crimes against Palestinians, including women and children, without fear of punishment. This has undoubtedly fostered a culture of impunity that prevails throughout the ranks of occupying forces and the settler population.

Moreover, evidence of how incitement by government officials itself leads to inflaming hate and racism among the Israeli public is reflected in the fact that shortly after the video of the extrajudicial execution surfaced on the Internet, polls conducted showed that more than half of Israelis support the Israeli soldier that carried out the execution. Furthermore, the Israeli soldier that carried this murder out has attracted widespread support on Israeli social media, with thousands of Israelis joining Facebook support groups and another 50,000 signing a petition backing his actions.

Having stated the above, we recognize the condemnation made by many in the international community of Israel's latest extrajudicial killing in grave violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. However, the international community must go further and compel an end to this cruel and illegal practice by the occupying Power. It is tragic, yet true, that if video footage had not been taken of this latest Israeli crime, it would have been ignored, just as the hundreds of other killings of Palestinians by the occupying Power have gone ignored and unpunished and with most of these killings attributed to so-called "thwarting attackers". The facts on the ground are shockingly clear and must not be distorted — the Palestinian civilian population is a defenceless population facing

the constant aggression of the occupying Power in the most violent and innumerable ways and they are in need of, and entitled to, protection in accordance with international humanitarian law, namely the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The Palestinian leadership thus again appeals to the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations in this regard and to undertake measures for the protection of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. These are not random incidents of human rights violations and war crimes by the Israeli occupying forces, but rather part of a systematic, intentional pattern of behaviour targeting and demeaning Palestinian lives. Justice must be served and the Palestinian people must be protected in order to avert more death, destruction and suffering being inflicted by Israel, the occupying Power, as it continues to trample and gravely breach international law. The international community cannot continue to rationalize, excuse or cover up Israel's crimes. The Security Council, which is tasked with the duty to maintain international peace and security and has taken upon itself commitments for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, must act forthwith to end Israeli impunity and be on the right side of history.

Before concluding, I must also draw attention to some of the other crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the period since our last letter to you:

23 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained overnight eight Palestinians from across the West Bank.
- Occupying forces demolished and removed Palestinian-owned residential structures in Khirbet Tana, a small village to the east of Nablus.
- Occupying forces closed the main entrances leading to the southern West Bank city of Al-Khalil and several neighbouring towns.
- Israeli settlers resumed provocative tours into Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Occupied East Jerusalem, inflaming tensions with Palestinian worshipers.

24 March 2016

- At least 23 Palestinians, including a young girl, were detained by Israeli occupying forces, mostly during predawn raids across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces shot dead Ramzi Qasrawi (age 21) and extrajudicially executed Abdul Fattah al-Sharif (age 21) in Tal Rumeida neighbourhood in the centre of Al-Khalil.

25 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces shot an elderly Palestinian man, Taysir Shtewei (age 68), in the head with a rubber-coated steel bullet and injured dozens of other civilians, including many who suffered excessive tear-gas inhalation, in the towns of Bilin and Kafr Qaddum.

26 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained a Palestinian and summoned five others for interrogation from the West Bank districts of Tubas and Bethlehem.
- Occupying forces shot and injured four Palestinians near the border in the Gaza Strip.
- Occupying forces opened fire on Palestinian farmers and shepherds in the Gaza Strip, forcing them to leave their fields.

27 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 12 Palestinians from across the West Bank, including from Bethlehem, Tulkarem and Al-Khalil.
- Occupying forces shot at Palestinian farmers and shepherds to the east of Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

28 March 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained seven Palestinians, including two children, during predawn raids across the West Bank.
- Persisting with illegal colonization measures, occupying forces demolished and destroyed a home, a farm, electric wires, a water network and trees and razed a tract of land at the northern entrance to Bethlehem.
- Occupying forces stormed the family homes of Ahmed Zakarneh, Mohammed Kamil and Najeh Abu al-Rub during a predawn raid in the town of Qabatiya, near Jenin, in order to demolish their homes in an act of collective punishment.
- Occupying forces issued and renewed administrative detention orders against 27 Palestinian detainees, keeping them captive in prison without a charge or trial. Ten of the detainees received administrative detention orders for the first time, whereas the remaining 17 received renewed administrative orders.

29 March 2016

- Israeli naval boats fired at Palestinian fishermen sailing offshore from Gaza, while occupying forces opened fire at farmers when they attempted to reach their lands.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 21 Palestinians, including a journalist, and assaulted another during several West Bank raids.
- Occupying forces demolished a children's playground, a wall and a stable and uprooted around 30 fruit trees in the East Jerusalem town of Silwan.

It is a regrettable fact that all such crimes by Israel, the occupying Power, and its occupying forces, whether its military forces or its settlers, will continue to be perpetrated against the Palestinian people if the international community continues to fail to hold Israel to account and to the same rules and norms of international law and human rights standards as the rest of the world. Israel is an occupying Power, and there are clear provisions of law and even clearer prohibitions that are being grossly, systematically and gravely violated by the occupying Power and its

occupying forces as a matter of policy and practice. Israel cannot continue to be exempt from the law, destroying innocent Palestinian lives, destroying the Palestinian land and fabric of our society and destroying the two-State solution and the prospects for peace. The international community must end its "management of this conflict" and seriously undertake measures to finally compel Israel to end its half-century occupation along with all of its other crimes against the Palestinian people and finally allow the Palestinian people to realize the freedom, rights and justice they have for too long been tragically denied.

This letter is in follow-up to our 580 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 22 March 2016 (A/ES-10/716-S/2016/270), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the
State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2016/296

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 April 2016
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 30 March 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 19 November 2015 to 29 February 2016 (S/2016/242):

1. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that it is committed to its obligations under the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and has accordingly respected the mandate of UNDOF and facilitated its work in every way. For over four decades, for as long as Israel has occupied the Syrian Golan, the Government has cooperated and coordinated closely and fully with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDOF command.

Syria again stresses that the occupied Syrian Golan is an integral part of the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic. UNDOF is therefore present on a temporary basis until such a time as Israel's occupation of the Syrian Golan comes to an end and Israel withdraws from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981).

2. The Syrian Government has always complied with the authoritative international resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Israel, however, has refused to implement United Nations resolutions requiring it to withdraw from the entire occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and has continued to violate the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement. For instance, Israel has deployed heavy weapons and materiel and advanced technology near and along the ceasefire line. It has abducted civilians near the technical fence on the liberated side and interrogated them inside occupied territory, releasing them on dirt tracks that are strewn with landmines. Israel also continues to provide all forms of direct support to armed terrorist groups in the area of separation. In the report under consideration, the Secretary-General states that interaction and cooperation between Israel and armed terrorist groups took place on six separate occasions. Indeed, the Syrian Government has confirmed intelligence stating that Israel interacts with the terrorist groups on a daily basis. The Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities under its own resolutions, particularly those relating to counter-terrorism, and take immediate measures against Israel and the other States that are

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supporting and financing those terrorist groups, as well as those States that are providing them with safe haven. Turning a blind eye to the risks posed by the presence and activities of those groups in the area of separation will only exacerbate instability there and throughout the region, in addition to putting the security and safety of United Nations personnel at risk.

3. Mindful of its obligations, Syria has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to the activities of armed terrorist groups in the UNDOF area of operation. It understands the nature of the region and the obligations that are in force. It reiterates that the actions of Syrian law enforcement forces are a response to an emergency situation arising from exceptional circumstances, namely the presence of terrorist groups carrying out terrorist activities in the area of separation.

4. Syria reiterates that the camps on the ceasefire line, which are purportedly intended for humanitarian purposes, are in fact logistical bases for armed terrorist groups to transport, ammunition, materiel and weapons from occupied territory into Syria.

5. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic finds it deplorable that, in its report, the Secretariat refers to the armed terrorist groups in the area of disengagement as non-State armed opposition groups and also as terrorist groups included on the terrorism lists of the Security Council. The Government stresses that all of the armed men are working either for the Nusrah Front or for Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), with support from Israel.

6. The Syrian Government again stresses that UNDOF must continue to fulfil its mandate within the context of Security Council resolutions and the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. Syria undertakes to continue supporting UNDOF as it has done over the years, so that UNDOF personnel can return to their positions in the area of separation securely, in cooperation and coordination with the Syrian Government, and fulfil their mandate as prescribed. The Syrian Government has provided UNDOF with all forms of support, so that it can redeploy in the area of separation after that area has been purged of armed terrorist groups. It has facilitated UNDOF reconnaissance patrols in the northern part of the area of separation, whereas Israel has continued to support all armed terrorist groups, thus impeding the Force's return to the area of separation.

7. Syria wishes again to emphasize the need to address the fundamental reason for the presence of UNDOF in the region, namely, the continuing Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. The Security Council must take immediate action to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Syrian Golan in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 497 (1981), and to compel Israel to withdraw fully from the Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2016/297

Security Council

Distr.: General
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Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2226 (2015), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) until 30 June 2016 and requested me to provide, by 31 March 2016, a report containing proposals for the further downsizing and possible termination of UNOCI, taking into account security conditions on the ground and the capacity of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to take over the security role of the Operation, a request reiterated by the Council in its resolution 2260 (2016). In accordance with those resolutions, a multidisciplinary strategic review mission led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat visited Côte d'Ivoire from 8 to 20 February 2016. The present report comprises the findings of the strategic review and my recommendations concerning the future of UNOCI, as well as an update on major developments since my report dated 8 December 2015 (S/2015/940).

II. Major developments

Political developments

2. During the period under review, the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, initiated a series of consultations with stakeholders aimed at furthering national reconciliation and social cohesion. On 7 December 2015, the President met with the chamber of traditional chiefs and kings, who advised that reconciliation and the easing of political tensions would be facilitated by measures such as releasing confiscated assets belonging to persons associated with the former President, Laurent Gbagbo, accelerating the release of persons detained for alleged involvement in the 2010-2011 post-elections crisis, encouraging the return of persons remaining in exile, supporting the reintegration of former combatants and evicting illegal occupants from national forests. The chiefs and kings also advised Mr. Ouattara to use his presidential pardon whenever applicable. On 8 December, Mr. Ouattara met with religious leaders who also underscored the importance of expediting judicial processes for persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis, and requested support for establishing an interreligious dialogue platform.

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3. Also on 8 December, Mr. Ouattara met with the president of the Commission nationale pour la réconciliation et l'indemnisation des victimes des crises survenues en Côte d'Ivoire, who encouraged him to continue direct dialogue with the political opposition, with a view to consolidating national reconciliation. The president of the Commission also proposed the establishment of special judicial chambers to expedite pending processes for persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis, as well as the provisional release of detainees and the granting of presidential pardons or amnesties within the limits of the law. He further recommended the undertaking of renewed efforts to encourage the return of persons in exile, while underscoring the importance of addressing issues relating to property rights and land, particularly with respect to women and vulnerable persons.

4. In a televised address to the nation on 31 December, Mr. Ouattara announced the granting of a presidential pardon for 3,100 prisoners, as well as the release of individuals detained in connection with the post-elections crisis. He also reaffirmed his intention to hold a constitutional referendum and legislative elections in 2016.

5. The Government tendered its resignation on 6 January, as requested by the President. On the same day, the Prime Minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, was reappointed. The formation of a new Cabinet of 36 ministers, including nine women, was announced on 12 January. With the exception of one minister appointed from civil society, all members of the Government are from the ruling coalition, the Rassemblement des houphouëtistes pour la démocratie et la paix (RHDP). The Government includes new ministries of human rights and public liberties, and solidarity, social cohesion and victims' compensation.

6. Mr. Ouattara met with a delegation of the former ruling Front populaire ivoirien (FPI) led by its president, Pascal Affi N'Guessan, on 21 January. Among the issues discussed were the status of persons detained for alleged violations committed during the post-elections crisis, the unfreezing of bank accounts and the return to Côte d'Ivoire of persons living in exile. Also discussed were structural issues such as political party financing, access to the state media and the demarcation of electoral constituencies. Subsequently, on 9 March, the Government approved the provisional release of 70 out of 300 persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis whose release had been sought by FPI, as well as the unfreezing of bank accounts belonging to four associates of Mr. Gbagbo, including his sister.

7. On 15 February, former President Henri Konan Bédié, the president of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), announced that an agreement had been reached with Mr. Ouattara to create a unified party. The new party, to be called RHDP, would comprise all willing members of the coalition, specifically the ruling Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), PDCI, the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire-Rassemblement démocratique africain (PDCI-RDA), the Mouvement des forces d'avenir (MFA), the Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire (UPCI) and the Union pour la démocratie et la paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI). Efforts were initiated to put in place the proposed party's infrastructure and legal framework and to engage party members.

8. On 22 February, Mr. Ouattara presided over the conclusion of a seminar on the government's programme of work, during which all ministers presented their priorities and planned actions for 2016. The programme, which is consistent with the national development plan, prioritizes five goals for 2016, specifically

strengthening of institutions for peace and good governance; structural transformation of the economy; improvement of living conditions; promotion of youth and women; and emergence of a "new Ivorian".

National and international justice

9. On 25 January, the trial resumed of 24 military officers charged in connection with the 2002 assassination of General Robert Guéï and his family. On 18 February, the military court sentenced General Dogbo Blé, the former head of the Garde républicaine; Commander Anselme Séka Yapo, former head of the close protection detail of the former First Lady, Simone Gbagbo; and Daléba Séry to life imprisonment for murder and complicity in murder, while 10 of the accused were sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The remaining 13 were acquitted.

10. On 28 January, at the opening of his trial at the International Criminal Court, Mr. Gbagbo pleaded not guilty to charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including complicity in murder, rape, inhumane acts and persecution. The co-accused, Charles Blé Goudé, also pleaded not guilty. During opening statements on 1 February, Mr. Gbagbo's defence council argued that he was the victim of an international conspiracy aimed at installing Mr. Ouattara in power by force.

11. On 4 February, Mr. Ouattara announced that no other Ivorian would be transferred to the International Criminal Court, as the Ivorian justice system was fully operational. Some opposition figures denounced this statement as fostering the perpetuation of one-sided justice.

Security situation

12. The security situation remained stable but fragile. For most of the reporting period, the environment was characterized by labour and student strikes, youth demonstrations and intercommunal conflict. There were also incidents of sexual violence, including the rape of children; clashes between the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) and communities; and violent crimes such as armed robbery and banditry. A terrorist attack on a beach resort in Grand-Bassam on 13 March, for whose commission al-Mourabitoun, a group based in northern Mali and affiliated with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, claimed responsibility injected a new dynamic into the security situation.

13. An unknown number of heavily armed assailants opened fire on civilians at three beachside hotels in Grand-Bassam. Twenty-two people were killed during the attack, including 16 national and foreign civilians, one of whom was a child, and three Ivorian defence personnel, as well as three assailants. In addition, thirty-three people were injured. Ivorian security forces responded rapidly to the situation; and UNOCI placed its quick-reaction forces on alert, reinforced its presence near the attack, at the Abidjan international airport and mission premises, and deployed to an area of Abidjan, where the assailants had reportedly been present earlier in the day. The following day, Mr. Ouattara convened an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Ministers during which measures were adopted to enhance security, including the deployment of security forces to all strategic sites and areas open to the public.

14. Other security incidents occurred during the reporting period. A FRCI post was reportedly attacked on 27 December in the Nougoua village, near the Noé border post with Ghana. No casualties were reported. One Ivorian and one Ghanaian national were arrested and detained in connection with the attack. A workers strike in Ferkessédougou on 22 January degenerated into violent clashes between protestors and Ivorian security forces, resulting in at least one death. On 20 February, detainees at the prison in Abidjan staged an uprising during which some of the prisoners were armed with assault rifles. One guard and 9 prisoners were killed during the exchange of fire, and 10 prisoners were injured.

15. On 6 March, community members in Assuéfry, near Bondoukou, clashed with FRCI during protests against the continuous extortion practised by soldiers. FRCI fired on the protesters, which resulted in the death of three persons and the injury of one. One person remains missing. The President deployed a team led by the Minister in charge of Defence to calm the situation; the presence of gendarmerie was also reinforced. Earlier, on 25 January, community members in Kouassi-Niaguini, near Boudoukou, clashed with FRCI during protests against extortion by soldiers.

16. On 2 March, the Government adopted a decree establishing a national centre for the coordination of early warning response, in collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The mechanism is intended to prevent conflict, fight terrorism and reduce response times following crisis alerts.

Regional developments

17. On 8 January, Mr. Ouattara was elected president of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. He succeeded the President of Benin, Boni Yayi.

18. Mr. Ouattara and Mr. Affi N'Guessan attended the 29 December swearing-in ceremony of the President of Burkina Faso, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. Subsequently, Mr. Kaboré expressed concern regarding the security threat to Burkina Faso posed by elements of the security apparatus of the former President, Blaise Compaoré, who had taken refuge in Côte d'Ivoire following the failed coup in September 2015. On 18 January, the Ivorian presidency issued a statement denouncing the decision of Burkina Faso to issue an international warrant for the arrest of the Speaker of the National Assembly, Guillaume Soro, for his alleged involvement in the attempted coup, and indicated that the matter would be settled through diplomatic channels. On 21 February, three members of the Burkinabè presidential security regiment which had perpetrated the attempted coup were extradited from Côte d'Ivoire to Burkina Faso to face justice. On 23 February, the media reported that Mr. Compaoré, who had been living in Côte d'Ivoire since having been deposed in October 2014, had been granted Ivorian citizenship in November 2014. An international warrant for the arrest of Mr. Compaoré for his alleged role in the 1987 killing of former President Thomas Sankara was issued on 4 December 2015 by the authorities of Burkina Faso.

III. Strategic review of Côte d'Ivoire

19. The strategic review mission conducted from 8 to 20 February was led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and comprised representatives of the

Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and UNOCI, as well as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representing United Nations development and humanitarian agencies, funds and programmes.

20. The strategic review team met with a broad cross section of stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire, including Mr. Ouattara; the Prime Minister and Cabinet members; the Speaker of the National Assembly; the national commissions responsible for social cohesion, reconciliation and human rights; members of the donor and diplomatic community; the leadership of the army, police and gendarmerie; political parties; civil society; UNOCI leadership, staff and uniformed personnel; and the United Nations country team. In Liberia, the review team consulted with UNMIL, the United Nations country team, members of the diplomatic community, and the leadership of the national security agencies. The team visited Maryland and River Gee counties in south-east of Liberia, near the border with Côte d'Ivoire, and the villages of Grabo, Olodio and Tabou in south-west Côte d'Ivoire, near the border with Liberia.

Findings of the strategic review

1. Political environment

21. Côte d'Ivoire continues to consolidate the gains made since the violence that marked the contested presidential elections of 2010. The peaceful conduct of the October 2015 election, which resulted in the re-election of Mr. Ouattara to a second and final term, was an important milestone, whose achievement was attributable not least to the acceptance by most stakeholders of the transparency and credibility of the election. Meanwhile, processes likely to result in the further consolidation of the political dispensation over the course of 2016, and its possible realignment ahead of the presidential succession in 2020, are on the horizon.

22. The Independent Electoral Commission advised that two electoral processes were planned for late 2016, including a constitutional referendum and legislative elections. The referendum could help to address structural issues at the root of the Ivorian crisis, as one of the proposed amendments aims to revise article 35 of the Constitution, which sets out the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, including the requirement that both parents be Ivorian citizens by birth. This provision could also trigger debates within the ruling political coalition, given that some PDCI members were the architects of article 35. Some opposition figures who were consulted welcomed the constitutional review. Many interlocutors, including national institutions responsible for human rights, civil society and political parties, had not yet been involved in preparations for the referendum, and expressed the view that the process should be as inclusive as possible.

23. Members of the political opposition, including those who boycotted the 2015 presidential election, have indicated that they would participate in the legislative elections, provided that conditions were in place to enhance their legitimacy. Those conditions would, in their view, include revisions to the electoral law, the demarcation of electoral districts and the establishment of a more independent

Independent Electoral Commission, which they considered to be dependent on the Government. While the Government has not formally requested United Nations support for the electoral processes in 2016, many stakeholders were of the view that the presence and support of UNOCI were essential, including with respect to human rights monitoring, which would enhance perceptions of the legitimacy of the electoral outcomes. In that regard, they pointed to violations of political and civil rights committed during the pre-election period in 2015, and expressed concern that such rights may be more seriously curtailed during the legislative elections. Meanwhile, the proposal to merge the RHDP coalition into a single party, as described in paragraph 7 above, could trigger the formation of new parties or coalitions ahead of the 2020 presidential election.

24. All interlocutors stressed the need for continued efforts aimed at taking forward a meaningful and comprehensive national reconciliation process, including political dialogue and community-level social cohesion. Mr. Ouattara announced that he would prioritize reconciliation within the nation during his second term, and opposition members engaged by the strategic review acknowledged that important gestures had been made to this end, including the release of persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis and the return of frozen or confiscated assets. However, some interlocutors also pointed to deficits undermining reconciliation. In the absence of political and institutional reforms, efforts aimed at political accommodation remained, in the view of some, superficial or arbitrary. Some interlocutors noted that judicial proceedings at both national and international levels had thus far focused only on violations allegedly perpetrated by Mr. Gbagbo and his associates during the crisis of 2010-2011, contributing to perceptions of victors' justice and impunity.

25. While economic growth was strong, averaging 9 per cent annually for the past four years, large segments of society, including youth, have yet to fully benefit from the prosperity of Côte d'Ivoire. Government officials recognized that this could be a destabilizing factor, and informed the strategic review team that it would prioritize more inclusive growth. Some interlocutors expressed the view that social cohesion was undermined by the impression in some communities, particularly in the west of the country, that policies had been put in place to benefit people from the north and foreigners at the expense of the indigenous population, particularly with respect to land use.

26. While noting these concerns, government officials stressed that national reconciliation and social cohesion were long-term, complex processes. Thus far, the Government's reconciliation agenda had been dominated by a reparations programme, initiated in 2015 which, to have a positive impact, would need to be inclusive of all victims. Meanwhile, the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission had finalized its report and recommendations for taking forward national reconciliation in December 2014, but to date its report has not been made public and the hearings held over the course of its three-year exploration of the Ivorian conflict have also not been made public, thereby weakening its potential impact.

2. Human rights situation

27. The human rights situation has improved since the post-elections crisis. However, important challenges remain. Former rebel commanders allegedly

responsible for past atrocities and human rights violations continue to hold positions of authority, including within the armed forces. Meanwhile, associates of Mr. Gbagbo tried in 2015 for crimes against the State have not yet been brought to justice for grave human rights violations committed during the crisis. Government officials assured the review mission that there would be no impunity for serious human rights violations and that judicial proceedings for alleged perpetrators on both sides would begin shortly.

28. An estimated 700,000 people in Côte d'Ivoire have remained stateless or at risk of becoming stateless, or lacked the documents required to prove their nationality. As a consequence, a large segment of society is ineligible for access to basic services, including children whose birth was never registered. The Government has ratified all international conventions concerning statelessness, and also reformed legislation to allow stateless persons and others born in the country to apply for citizenship if they have lived in Côte d'Ivoire for decades. However, implementation remains a challenge. Meanwhile, a proposed national action plan for the eradication of statelessness has not been finalized or approved.

29. Côte d'Ivoire remains on the list of countries examined by my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and continues to face serious challenges with respect to sexual and gender-based violence, including against children. A national strategy to combat sexual violence was adopted by the Government in 2014, but implementation has been limited to the initial steps, such as community mobilization.

30. In 2015, Côte d'Ivoire was removed from the list of countries examined by my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. However, significant challenges remained. Approximately half of reported human rights violations involve children. Children in conflict with the law are particularly vulnerable, as they are often detained in inappropriate conditions; urgent reforms in the juvenile justice and penal system are thus required.

3. Security-related issues

31. The security situation continued to improve, although challenges remained. Most of the strategic review's interlocutors were preoccupied to a great extent by the threat to Côte d'Ivoire posed by the spread of violent extremism and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel.

32. The south-west is the only part of the country assessed as facing a threat of a military nature, owing to periodic armed attacks against national security institutions, most recently on two FRCI camps in Olodio on 2 December 2015, during which 7 soldiers were killed and 14 were seriously injured. Security personnel who were consulted advised that recent attacks, unlike attacks committed between 2012 and 2014, were not cross-border in nature and were motivated by factors internal to Côte d'Ivoire. There is particular tension resulting from an influx into the area of persons from other parts of Côte d'Ivoire and foreigners, who are seen as illegally exploiting land in collusion with FRCI, which is perceived by some in indigenous communities as an occupying rebel force.

33. The security environment is also impacted by the accessibility of unauthorized weapons, contributing to the high incidence of violent crimes, including banditry. In November 2015, arms caches were found in Guiglo, in the Kouroukoro village near

the border with Mali, and in the Kokonou village near the border with Ghana. An arms cache was also discovered in Duékoué in January 2016.

34. Intercommunal conflict, primarily over land and boundary disputes, is also a source of insecurity. In the west, Man, Odienné and Toulépleu continued to have a high incidence of such conflict, as do Abengourou, Aboisso and Bondoukou in the east and Korhogo in the north. Conflict between communities and illegal miners, most of whom are foreign, continues to be an issue in Aboisso, Bouna and Daoukro.

Security sector reform

35. Important advances were made during Mr. Ouattara's first term with respect to the operational effectiveness and governance of the security sector, as well as the expansion of service provision. Notwithstanding operational deficits, national security institutions are performing their statutory functions with greater understanding of their roles as well as enhanced capacity. However, most government officials expressed the view that efforts to equip the army and law enforcement services appropriately are hampered by the arms embargo remaining in effect. Regional security councils in bringing together state and non-state actors such as civil society could be an important mechanism for decentralizing security services and addressing community-based insecurity. However, the effectiveness of these councils has been undermined by trust deficits, including between communities and security institutions, between civil administration and security institutions, and among the various services of the security apparatus.

36. FRCI has made improvements as a result of legislation increasing civilian oversight and enhancing the effectiveness and affordability of the armed forces, for example, through plans to achieve a ratio of 60:40 between operational costs and investment, including in training and equipment, by 2020. However, significant challenges remain, such as those posed by parallel command and control structures, lack of internal cohesion, indiscipline and shortcomings in operational capability. Some of the strategic review's interlocutors expressed concern that former commanders of the Forces nouvelles dominate the leadership structure of FRCI and that ethnic and other differences between FRCI soldiers and the population in some areas have contributed to brutality, extortion and other infractions. Armed robberies and other violent crimes continued to be committed by informal armed elements associated with FRCI. Challenges also remained with respect to gender balance. FRCI commanders conceded that the current 2 per cent representation of women is inadequate and advised that efforts would be made to reach a proportion of at least 20 per cent.

37. The national police service has made progress, but its effectiveness is impacted by an overcentralized governance structure, which undermined command and control, as well as a lack of budgetary autonomy, which hampers daily operations and planning. Reform proposals aimed at restructuring and strengthening trust between civil society and the security forces, included in the internal security planning act adopted by the Government and submitted to the National Assembly on 6 January 2016, remain to be implemented. While the gendarmerie remains intact with respect to its internal discipline and infrastructure, its centralized, overhierarchical command structure requires reforms to enable the delegation of authority to local commanders so as to enhance effectiveness. A new law on internal security programming provides for measures that give budgetary control to the

gendarmerie, which represents an important step. Efforts are also under way to maximize complementarity between the police and the gendarmerie by optimizing synergies, including the establishment of an inter-force cooperation mechanism focused on terrorism.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

38. National disarmament and demobilization activities concluded on 14 August 2015. UNOCI handed over the primary site for disarmament and demobilization, the Anyama camp in Abidjan, to FRCI on 30 October 2015. As of 31 January 2016, a total of 69,506 former combatants had entered the national programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration conducted between 2012 and 2015, of which 60,133 are considered reintegrated. The remaining caseload of 9,373 ex-combatants is enrolled in, or waiting to commence, reinsertion activities. Additionally, there are an estimated 2,000 former combatants in Liberia who may be ineligible for any assistance, as combatants returning from exile cannot benefit from reinsertion activities unless they are registered in an appropriate government database.

39. Throughout the disarmament process, a total of 43,510 armaments, including 14,121 weapons, were collected. Many interlocutors pointed to the discrepancy between the number of former combatants enrolled in the process and the number of serviceable weapons handed over. Efforts are required to ensure greater transparency, including with respect to access to the database of former combatants, so that the tangible impact of the programme can be clarified.

4. Humanitarian situation

40. The humanitarian situation has improved since the post-elections crisis of 2010-2011, with estimated requirements for life-saving interventions decreasing from $400 million in 2012 to under $50 million in 2015. The focus of intervention has therefore shifted towards supporting the equitable access to basic social services. Despite the positive trend, however, many people in Côte d'Ivoire remain in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

41. The post-elections crisis triggered the displacement of some 300,000 Ivorian refugees to Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Togo, with Liberia hosting some 220,000 refugees at the peak of the crisis. Approximately 50,000 refugees remain in neighbouring countries, including Liberia (just under 28,000), as well as Ghana (11,450), Guinea (6,560), Mali (1,000) and Togo (2,270). There are also 300,000 internally displaced persons, primarily in Abidjan and the west.

42. In July 2014, the Ivorian authorities closed the country's borders with Guinea and Liberia, as a preventive measure, following the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in those countries. Those borders have remained closed as of 15 March. However, with the agreement of the Ivorian Government, voluntary repatriation facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resumed through humanitarian corridors on 18 December 2015. As of 15 March, 10,195 Ivorian refugees had been repatriated. UNHCR is planning to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of 25,000 Ivorian refugees in 2016 and 8,000 in 2017, while about 5,000 refugees are expected to opt for local reintegration. The UNOCI force provides physical protection for return operations, thereby facilitating an environment conducive to repatriation and reintegration efforts.

43. The fact that foreigners, who are primarily economic migrants, constitute approximately 24 per cent of the population of Côte d'Ivoire sometimes results in tensions with indigenous communities in areas of the country. Although a national strategy on migration was adopted in 2014 with support from the International Organization for Migration, the management of migrants is hampered by uncertain statistics and suffers from inadequate coordination among various ministries. Meanwhile, protected forests and national parks are illegally occupied by thousands of migrants from neighbouring countries. Over 20,000 people are occupying Mont Péko National Park, of which 95 per cent are foreign nationals. These occupants, including vulnerable groups, require support for relocation and the provision of basic and other services, while the communities into which they are relocated also need support. The Ivorian and Burkinabè authorities have agreed to begin the voluntary repatriation of occupants from Mont Péko to Burkina Faso in 2016.

5. Border assessment and regional issues

44. The situation in the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border area has improved since a similar assessment conducted in 2014. However, as described in paragraph 32 above, the situation in south-west Côte d'Ivoire remains fraught, with continuing instability exacerbated by communities' palpable distrust of FRCI, land conflict, and intercommunal disputes aggravated by the migration into the area of persons seeking to exploit the land. Stability is further undermined by periodic attacks triggered by the encroachment upon land of persons who are not from the area. Interlocutors stressed that a lack of social cohesion linked to the delay in the broader national reconciliation process impacts negatively on efforts to sustain peace and stability.

45. On the Liberian side of the border, there was considerable concern about instability in the contiguous area in Côte d'Ivoire. Interlocutors pointed to cases of killings or disappearances under unknown circumstances which had not been fully investigated. This included the rumoured presence in Vyee Island of armed persons engaged in nefarious activities in the absence of any intervention by the security forces of either country.

46. There remain serious shortcomings with respect to the delivery of basic social and security services on both sides of the border. On the Liberian side, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the Liberia National Police are being increasingly deployed, but lack sufficient personnel, logistics and mobility. The Armed Forces of Liberia, meanwhile, have deployed small, temporary detachments to investigate reports of the illegal encroachment upon land of foreign farmers in Grand Gedeh and River Gee counties. The UNMIL force will cease operations in April and withdraw from the border in May, in keeping with the drawdown for UNMIL pursuant to Security Council resolution 2239 (2015). While FRCI is better equipped and has sufficient personnel, there is still a need to take the required steps to bolster trust with the population.

47. While most of the Ivorian refugees remaining in Liberia have expressed their intention to return home, many have concerns about the security situation and lack of access to basic services, and fear the occupation of their lands by foreigners. There is a risk of the exacerbation of land disputes and intercommunal clashes in areas of return. The World Food Programme estimates that approximately 13 per cent of the population in the west faces food insecurity. It is essential that there be a

national commitment to facilitating the return and reintegration of the displaced, ensuring equitable access to services, and respecting their rights.

48. The cross-border security strategy adopted by the Mano River Union in 2013 has yet to be fully implemented. Initial steps have been taken, however, to establish joint border security and confidence-building units for bringing together border communities, which, if given adequate support, have the potential to defuse tensions and address threats.

Recommendations of the strategic review

49. Taking into account the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the border area, it is recommended that the mandate of UNOCI be extended for a final period, until 30 June 2017, including a two-month period of mission closure, as described in paragraph 61 below. Until 30 April 2017, UNOCI should have a prioritized mandate focused on the tasks identified as being most essential for consolidating the progress made over the 12 years of its deployment in Côte d'Ivoire.

50. Specifically, the mission should continue to play a role with respect to facilitating nationally owned processes such as reconciliation and social cohesion, as well as support institutional reforms. Going forward, it is envisaged that the support provided by UNOCI to the Government in the areas of reinsertion of former combatants and security sector reform would be provided in this context, given that many of the challenges posed by these processes are political in nature. UNOCI uniformed personnel would continue to provide operational-level advice and mentorship to their national counterparts. ONUCI FM, the mission's radio station, would continue to play an important role with respect to disseminating messages of peace, while also communicating information to the population regarding the forthcoming transformation of the United Nations engagement in Côte d'Ivoire. Ahead of the electoral processes, it would also be critical to keep watch on the media environment in order to mitigate inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech.

51. The mission should also retain a strong human rights mandate, including support for the national reconciliation process, while also engaging in monitoring and early warning activities and the development of national capacity to promote and protect human rights. UNOCI should also retain its mandate to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, with an emphasis on physical protection. It is further recommended that UNOCI and UNMIL, with the respective country teams, continue to support the border stabilization initiatives of the Ivorian and Liberian authorities, in collaboration with such regional partners as the Mano River Union and ECOWAS.

52. In light of the improvement in the ability of the national defence and security services to perform their functions, and with the closure of the mission on the horizon, it would be appropriate for the Ivorian authorities to fully assume UNOCI security responsibilities in the months ahead. It is therefore recommended that the protection-of-civilians mandate of UNOCI be limited to in extremis support for Ivorian security agencies in protecting civilians in the event of a deterioration of the security situation, which, taking into account the reduction of the mission's capabilities and areas of deployment, could pose the risk of a reversal of peace and stability in the country.

IV. Proposed adjustments to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Military component

53. As indicated in my previous reports, UNOCI has been progressively drawing down, reducing the force from its peak strength of 9,792 in 2012. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2260 (2016), UNOCI withdrew 1,468 troops between January and March 2016, including an infantry battalion (750 troops), two military task forces (533 troops), aviation (31 personnel) and a support company (154 personnel). By 31 March 2016, UNOCI will have reached 3,969 out of its authorized strength of 4,000 military personnel, including two infantry battalions (1,606 troops) deployed in the west, a 650-troop-strong quick-reaction force based in Yamoussoukro, two task forces (861 troops) deployed in Abidjan and associated enablers (594 personnel), as well as 97 staff officers and 192 military observers.

54. Consideration of the necessary strength of the force for the period ahead took into account a thorough threat assessment, a troop-to-task analysis and the capacity of the National Armed Forces. It also took into account the priority tasks of the UNOCI military component for the duration of the mission's deployment, including facilitation of humanitarian assistance and support for border stabilization initiatives amid a continuing military threat in the south-west part of the country, as well as the proposed scope of the UNOCI protection-of-civilians mandate.

55. Specifically, it is proposed that there be a reduction of an additional 1,969 troops, which would leave 2,000 personnel by 31 August 2016. This would be achieved by repatriating two infantry battalions (1,065 troops); one company from the battalion deployed in the south-west (200); one company from the headquarters protection unit (156); and associated enablers, specifically engineering (175), a military hospital (56) and signals (90), as well as 135 staff officers and 92 military observers. The 2,000 remaining troops would include one infantry battalion deployed in the south-west (650); the quick-reaction force (650); a headquarters protection unit (300); and associated enablers, specifically aviation (176) and signals (66), as well as 58 staff officers and 100 military observers consolidated at nine team sites, primarily in the west. As a result of the proposed reductions, UNOCI will not be able to respond positively should a request for electoral security support be forthcoming. In 2017, final reductions would include the infantry battalion deployed in the south-west and one aviation unit in February; the quick-reaction force and its aviation unit as well as all military observers in March; and headquarters elements, specifically the protection unit, and signals and staff officers, in April.

56. As the quick-reaction force established within UNOCI pursuant to Security Council resolution 2162 (2014) remains a critical asset, it is therefore planned that the force will be among the last military units repatriated from Côte d'Ivoire. Options are being explored to enable the unit to remain a tool for regional peace and stability beyond the life cycle of UNOCI, further to its original concept. Subject to meeting the conditions detailed in Council resolution 1609 (2005), it is recommended that, if redeployed to another peacekeeping operation, the unit should continue to fulfil a mandate to provide in extremis support to UNMIL and its successor mission, along the lines of the provisions of Council resolution 2162

(2014). Specific proposals will be included in my future reports on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and UNMIL further to a lessons-learned exercise, including on the utility of a similar tool in other contexts. Taking into account the joint letter dated 29 January 2016 from the President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Mr. Ouattara addressed to me, as referred to in my thirty-first progress report, dated 22 February 2016, on UNMIL (S/2016/169, para. 22), and provided that all necessary agreements and authorizations are received, the unit could be placed on standby during the 2017 electoral period in Liberia for possible deployment, if warranted by the security situation.

French forces

57. In its resolution 2226 (2015), the Security Council authorized the Forces françaises en Côte d'Ivoire to provide support to UNOCI, within the limits of the forces' deployment and capabilities. That support continues to be necessary. Meanwhile, collaboration continues in supporting FRCI, as well as tripartite meetings held twice monthly, which bring together FRCI, UNOCI and the French forces.

Police component

58. The authorized strength of the UNOCI police component stands at 1,500 personnel, including 500 individual police officers and 1,000 officers deployed in six formed police units. For the duration of their deployment, United Nations police will focus on consolidating progress made in enhancing the capacity of national law enforcement agencies. It is recommended that the strength of the individual police officers progressively decrease, reaching 250 by December 2016, with a focus on mentoring and operational-level support to the national police and gendarmerie, as well as the transnational crime unit. The police component's deployment would be aligned to the regional areas of operational responsibility of the national police and gendarmerie, with team sites decreasing from 23 to 12 by the end of 2016. Support at the tactical level will cease. The remaining 250 individual police officers would be repatriated progressively, with none remaining by 30 April 2017. The eight customs officers are no longer required.

59. Consideration of the necessary strength of formed police units took into account a thorough threat assessment and analysis of the capacities of national law enforcement agencies, as well as the deployment of UNOCI force and the proposed scope of the protection-of-civilians mandate. It is therefore recommended that three of six formed police units be repatriated immediately during scheduled rotations in March and April 2016. One of the units remaining would be deployed in Abidjan, a city of strategic importance with limited force presence, as well as one each to Bouaké and Daloa, areas with frequent incidents of public disorder and intercommunal violence. All units would be downsized from 180 to the standard 140 personnel. The three remaining units would be repatriated in March and April 2017.

Civilian component

60. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/258 B of 25 June 2015, UNOCI has 1,225 civilian posts, including 713 national and 512 international posts. Adjustments are under way to enable achievement of a phased drawdown of civilian staff, taking into account priorities for the substantive mandate of UNOCI for the final year of its deployment, as detailed in paragraphs 50 and 51 above, while also ensuring that the mission retains the requisite expertise. The civilian field presence would also be consolidated.

Support implications

61. By 30 June 2017, the full closure of the mission would be complete. This would include all associated tasks such as the closure of facilities, removal of equipment, final payments and other administrative requirements. A team specialized in such tasks, overseen by appropriate leadership, would operate from 1 May to 30 June 2017, and would also finalize the transition to the United Nations country team, as well as any political facilitation deemed appropriate by the Government.

62. The drawdown of the mission would proceed in parallel with the final year of mandated operations. Consequently, the write-off or transfer of UNOCI assets to other peacekeeping operations, the United Nations country team or the Government is under way. Appropriate mechanisms and procedures are also in place to ensure that the closure of UNOCI is completed in an environment-conscious manner. Consideration is being given to transferring over to the United Nations country team, UNOCI headquarters at Sebroko, which, pending government approval, would serve as a United Nations House.

63. The Government has expressed its wish to retain ONUCI FM after the closure of the mission. The radio station would be operated by the Fondation Félix Houphouët-Boigny in the context of its programme in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the culture of peace. Discussions are under way to develop a detailed operational plan, taking into account the associated costs, as well as the need to guarantee equal access by all segments of Ivorian society, impartiality and editorial independence.

Safety and security of personnel

64. The assessed risk to United Nations personnel and installations in Côte d'Ivoire is low to medium, with the greatest threat being posed by criminal activity. Preparations are under way to ensure the provision of security for the United Nations country team following the closure of UNOCI.

65. During the 13 March attack on Grand-Bassam, as described in paragraph 13 above, a United Nations Volunteer was killed and a UNOCI police officer was severely injured. Both were among the beach-goers and were not specifically targeted. Security has since been reinforced at United Nations installations.

Serious misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse

66. Issues of conduct and discipline become more acute during mission closures. UNOCI will therefore enhance its capacity in this area.

67. During the period under review, two cases of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded, in addition to one allegation of serious misconduct. There were additional allegations of five incidents of category 2 misconduct. Investigations are under way.

V. Future of the United Nations in Côte d'Ivoire

68. Given the positive trajectory in Côte d'Ivoire, no United Nations successor mission is recommended following the withdrawal of UNOCI, which is consistent with the views of the Government. However, the United Nations will continue to accompany Côte d'Ivoire through the United Nations country team, which will provide support, consistent with the mandates of the respective agencies, funds and programmes, and within the limits of available resources. The process of transitioning tasks performed by UNOCI to the Government, the United Nations country team or other partners, which began in 2013, has therefore taken on a renewed urgency.

69. During the final period of its mandated operations, UNOCI will focus on transitioning remaining priorities towards the United Nations country team and other partners, with a view to consolidating gains, while also facilitating the efforts needed to address longer-term challenges which will remain following the closure of the mission. Options for engaging the country team in the mandated tasks of UNOCI while the mission is still deployed, supported by the mission's budget, will be pursued as appropriate, in keeping with the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) and the report constituting my response thereto (S/2015/682). It would be particularly relevant for UNOCI, as a long-standing mission, to engage with the United Nations country team and other partners in delivering on identified priorities for mandate implementation. Such an approach would also assist the United Nations country team and other partners in building the capacity and sustaining the momentum needed to continue priority work after the closure of UNOCI.

70. The United Nations will work closely with regional and other stakeholders, in particular multilateral and other partners, in developing and implementing the strategy by which its engagement in Côte d'Ivoire is transformed. The engagement of the African Union and ECOWAS in complementing the work of the United Nations country team following the departure of UNOCI would be essential.

VI. Financial implications

71. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/258 B of 25 June 2015, appropriated the amount of $402.7 million for the maintenance of the Operation for the period from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016 (see my report on the budget for UNOCI for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/70/753)). My proposed budget in the amount of $320.7 million for the maintenance of the mission for the

period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 has been submitted to the Assembly for its consideration during the second part of its resumed seventieth session. It should be noted that proposed requirements are based on the prevailing mandate and scope of the mission.

72. As at 14 March 2016, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNOCI amounted to $128.1 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as of the same date amounted to $2,602.8 million.

73. Reimbursement of troop and formed police costs has been made for the period up to 31 January 2016, while reimbursement of the costs of contingent-owned equipment has been made for the period up to 31 December 2015, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VII. Observations

74. When UNOCI deployed in April 2004 at the request of the Ivorian authorities, Côte d'Ivoire was a country split in half, north and south divided by a militarily enforced zone of confidence, and in the grip of a political stalemate. Ceasefire violations were prevalent, as were serious human rights violations against civilians. Once a beacon of peace, stability and prosperity in a region racked by vicious civil wars, the Côte d'Ivoire of 2004 was at the edge of a precipice. However, the country did evolve: Peace agreements were implemented and the zone of confidence was dissolved. Despite the setback experienced in connection with the contested 2010 elections, which resulted in a crisis during which approximately 3,000 people were killed and a further 600,000 were displaced, the country continued to evolve. Five years after the post-elections crisis of 2010-2011, Côte d'Ivoire is well along on the path to enduring peace and stability, as well as economic prosperity. I wish to congratulate the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire for their determination, which has made this positive evolution possible.

75. However, consolidating peace requires the full commitment of all citizens to a comprehensive and meaningful process of national reconciliation. Among the objectives of such a process must be defining and agreeing on a shared sense of *nation*, as well as on the responsibilities of the citizens of that nation. Such questions are particularly pertinent and potentially fraught for Côte d'Ivoire, as, notwithstanding the progress that continues to be made, the wounds inflicted by the Ivorian conflict and brought to light during the post-elections crisis, have yet to heal.

76. I welcome the efforts of Mr. Ouattara to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders with a view to furthering political dialogue in the spirit of national reconciliation. I further welcome the receptive spirit in which the President's overtures have been received. It is a positive sign that the full membership of the Ivorian political class intends to play an active and constructive role in the electoral processes that are to unfold later this year. At the same time, reforms must go forward with a view to addressing structural injustices. I therefore welcome the planned constitutional referendum, which provides an important opportunity for agreement on a new, shared sense of nation. I underscore the importance of ensuring that the process is fully inclusive.

77. Healing the wounds of the past, and addressing the grievances of the present, will also require action aimed at addressing the root causes of the Ivorian conflict, including with respect to land tenure, nationality and identity, as well as the consolidation of an effective and accountable security sector. While I welcome the efforts made in this regard, a continued instability triggered by issues relating to land and belonging makes it clear that more decisive action is required, including in the context of the process of achieving the social cohesion.

78. I remain concerned by the continuing perceptions of one-sided justice and impunity for human rights violations, and reiterate my call for all perpetrators of human rights violations, irrespective of their political affiliation, to be held accountable. Persistent human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, are also deeply concerning. Urgent action is required to fight impunity for such crimes and to ensure the protection of civilians, particularly women and children. The development of the capacity of national institutions to promote and protect human rights must remain a priority if peace in Côte d'Ivoire is to be sustained. This would involve the strengthening of the National Human Rights Commission, including through granting it constitutional rank and full autonomy in compliance with the Paris Principles. The United Nations will continue to extend the necessary support for these initiatives, in close collaboration with the Government.

79. I remain deeply troubled by delays in the investigations of major cases such as the killing in June 2012 of seven United Nations peacekeepers, as well as the attack in July 2012 on the Nahibly camp for internally displaced persons. I reiterate that the Government is responsible for bringing the perpetrators of those international crimes to justice.

80. I am outraged by, and condemn in the strongest terms, the terrorist attacks on innocent civilians in Grand-Bassam on 13 March. I reiterate my deepest sympathy for and condolences to the families of the deceased, as well as the steadfast solidarity of the United Nations with the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire. Such reprehensible attacks have no justification. All perpetrators, organizers, financers and sponsors of terrorist acts must be brought to justice in accordance with international law. I welcome the resolve of regional leaders to work closely together to counter the scourge of violent extremism and terror, which cannot be contained by borders. The United Nations remains committed to helping to strengthen such regional collaboration and supporting the development of comprehensive strategies for addressing this growing threat.

81. The Ivorian security services have made progress, as demonstrated by the welcome improvements in the security environment and by their swift and effective response to the terrorist attack of 13 March. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in the south-west part of the county where the Ivorian Armed Forces have failed to gain the trust of the population, which has contributed to periodic attacks and continued instability amid ongoing refugee return operations. I urge the Government to take forward critical reforms within the security sector, with a view to addressing worrying challenges that undermine trust and reconciliation. It is equally important to explore options for addressing the outstanding caseload of former combatants, while ensuring that they all have sustainable reintegration opportunities, with a view to ensuring that they are constructive members of Ivorian society.

82. The year 2016 will be an important one for the consolidation of the political dispensation in Côte d'Ivoire. It will also be a year during which structural and other reforms critical to the national reconciliation and social cohesion process will advance. With continued good progress in these and other ongoing processes, it would be appropriate to conclude that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire no longer poses a threat to peace and stability in the region. In line with the findings of the strategic review, I therefore recommend a final extension of the mandate of UNOCI until 30 June 2017. I further recommend that the mandate of UNOCI be adjusted to reflect the priorities identified in paragraphs 50 to 52 above. Finally, I recommend further adjustments of the UNOCI military and police components, as detailed in paragraphs 55, 58 and 59 above, which would bring the authorized strength of UNOCI to 2,000 military and 670 police personnel. Provided that conditions remain conducive, all UNOCI military and police, as well as almost all civilian personnel, would depart the country by 30 April 2017, with the full closure of the mission completed by 30 June 2017.

83. The trajectory of Côte d'Ivoire is positive and consequently no successor United Nations presence is recommended beyond that of the country team. However, there is a clear risk that, unless additional resources accompany the transfer of critical residual tasks to the Government or the United Nations country team, those tasks may no longer be performed, which would potentially undermine the sustainability of the gains achieved thus far. I therefore call upon all stakeholders, particularly bilateral partners and other donors, to provide the resources needed to facilitate the transformation of the United Nations engagement in Côte d'Ivoire.

84. I would like to thank my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her excellent leadership, and all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. My appreciation also goes to the troop- and police-contributing countries, donor countries, regional and multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations that continue to provide invaluable support to Côte d'Ivoire. I wish also to pay special tribute to the essential role played by the African Union and ECOWAS throughout the Ivorian peace process, which facilitated the achievements attained by UNOCI, and without which the country might not now be entering the final phase of the peacekeeping presence.

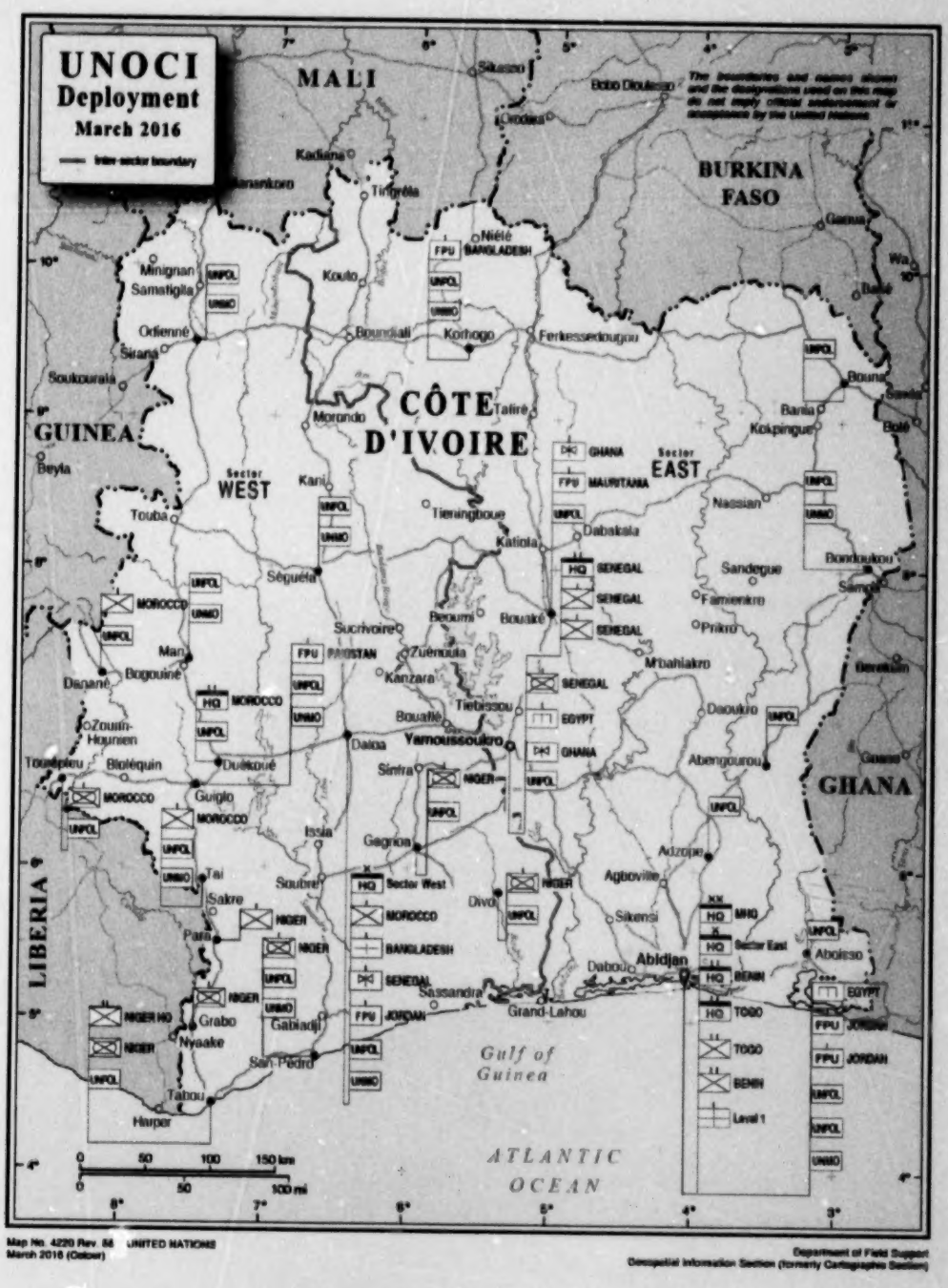
Annex I

United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength

	Military component				*Police component*	
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Argentina						3
Bangladesh	13	10	729	752	180	
Benin	9	7	368	384		57
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	3			3		
Brazil	4	3		7		
Burkina Faso						45
Burundi						29
Cameroon	1			1		24
Central African Republic						
Chad	6			6		16
China	6			6		
Democratic Republic of the Congo						6
Djibouti						
Ecuador	2			2		
Egypt		1	174	175		
El Salvador	3			3		
Ethiopia	2			2		
France		8		8		6
Gambia	3			3		
Ghana	6	8	97	111		2
Guatemala	5			5		
Guinea	2			2		
India	9			9		
Ireland	3			3		
Jordan	8	11		19	482	9
Kazakhstan	2			2		
Madagascar						2
Malawi	3	1		4		
Mali		1		1		
Mauritania					140	
Morocco		4	715	719		
Namibia	1			1		
Nepal	3	1		4		
Niger	5	3	864	872		40

Country	Military component				Police component	
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops	Total	Formed police units	Police officers
Nigeria	2			2		
Pakistan	12	13	277	302	189	
Paraguay	1	1		2		
Peru	2			2		
Philippines	3			3		
Poland	2			2		
Republic of Korea	2			2		
Republic of Moldova	2			2		
Romania	6			6		
Russian Federation	10			10		
Rwanda						8
Senegal	6	5	731	742		16
Serbia	3			3		
Spain		1		1		
Switzerland						1
Togo	7	6	465	478		43
Tunisia	8	3		11		38
Turkey						3
Uganda	5	2		7		
Ukraine		3		3		9
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2		4		
Uruguay	1			1		
Vanuatu						11
Yemen	9	1		10		11
Zambia	2			2		
Zimbabwe	2			2		
Total	**186**	**95**	**4 420**	**4 701**	**991**	**379**

Annex II


UNOCI
Deployment
March 2016
Inter-sector boundary
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
MALI
BURKINA FASO
GUINEA
LIBERIA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
GHANA
Sector WEST
Sector EAST
Sector West
Sector East
Abidjan
Yamoussoukro
Gulf of Guinea
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Map No. 4220 Rev. 56 UNITED NATIONS
March 2016 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2016/298

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2016
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 31 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith information on the smuggling of antiquities by the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Churkin**

16-05258 (E) 010416 040416

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 31 March 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Smuggling of antiquities by the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

Around 100,000 cultural objects of global importance, including 4,500 archaeological sites, nine of which are included in the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), are under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Syria and Iraq. The profit derived by the Islamists from the illicit trade in antiquities and archaeological treasures is estimated at US$ 150-200 million per year.

Within ISIL, the smuggling of artefacts is organized by the antiquities division (commander: Abu Sayyaf al-Iraqi), which is part of the so-called ministry for control of natural resources within the group's "government". Only individuals in possession of a written permit stamped by this "department" are permitted by the Islamists to carry out excavations and to remove and transport excavated items.

Antiquities from Syria and Iraq are exported by the extremists mostly through the territory of Turkey. The main centre for the smuggling of cultural heritage items is the Turkish city of Gaziantep, where the stolen goods are sold at illegal auctions and then through a network of antique shops and at the local market, Bakırcılar Çarşısi (Eski Saray Street, Şekeroğlu district).

It has been observed that new offices for the purchase of antiquities have opened on the Turkish-Syrian border in the administrative district of Akçakale (640 km south-east of Ankara, Şanlıurfa Province). Ismet Eren, the owner of an antique shop at 24 Karanfil Street in the town of Kilis, is involved in the illicit trade. Bulky goods are delivered by the Turkish transport companies Şenocak Nakliyat, Devran Nakliyat, Karahan Nakliyat and Egemen Nakliyat. Smuggled artefacts (jewellery, coins, etc.) then arrive in the Turkish cities of Izmir, Mersin and Antalya, where representatives of international criminal groups produce fake documents on the origin of the antiquities.

The antiquities are then offered to collectors from various countries, generally through Internet auction sites such as eBay and specialized online stores (vauctions.com, ancients.info, vcoins.com, trocadero.com and auctionata.com). The sites osmanlielsanatlari.com, kaynarcopper.com and ertasantik.com are also used to find buyers. The criminals employ concealment measures, such as IP-address spoofing, which makes it difficult to identify and determine the actual location of the seller. Recently ISIL has been exploiting the potential of social media more and more frequently so as to cut out the middleman and sell artefacts directly to buyers. Preference is given to cash transactions, while transactions conducted over the Internet involve the same financial institutions as are involved in transactions for the purchase of weapons and ammunition

United Nations S/2016/299

Security Council

Distr.: General
31 March 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 31 March 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013) and 2183 (2014), I have the honour to convey the attached letter dated 14 March 2016, which I received from the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, transmitting the forty-first report on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annex). The report covers the period from 1 March to 31 August 2015.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

16-05266 (E) 040416

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Annex

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013) and 2183 (2014), please find enclosed the forty-first report on Operation Althea to the United Nations Security Council (see enclosure).

(*Signed*) Federica **Mogherini**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 March to 31 August 2015.

2. The Security Council, in its resolutions 1575 (2004), 1639 (2005), 1722 (2006), 1785 (2007), 1845 (2008), 1895 (2009), 1948 (2010), 2019 (2011), 2074 (2012), 2123 (2013) and 2183 (2014), requests that Member States, acting through or in cooperation with the European Union, report to the Council on the activities of the European Union military operation (EUFOR) at least at six-monthly intervals. This is the forty-first such report.

II. Political background

3. The latest reporting period on the EUFOR Althea mission has most importantly been marked by the final formation of institutions following the October 2014 general elections and the split and reshuffling of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Federation coalition. Despite this in-fighting, important steps have been made in the adoption and implementation of the reform agenda subsequently approved by BiH authorities, which has marked a significant departure from the prolonged period of stalemate and lack of progress on European Union integration. However, some challenges remain in delivering the reform agenda and, as already underlined in previous reports, similar challenges have remained in the difficult political environment and dynamics, brought to a head in the run-up to and during the Srebrenica commemorations.

4. The formation of BiH institutions after the October elections took place within a reasonable time period, especially when taking into account the complexity of the country's constitutional structures. The Republika Srpska (RS) authorities were formed first, and then the new BiH Council of Ministers and FBiH Governments were sworn in on 31 March. However, less than two and a half months after the inauguration of the FBiH Government, the work of the Government and Parliament in the FBiH was hampered by in-fighting within the coalition, a government reshuffle and a reduced majority in Parliament.

5. In line with the Council conclusions of 15 December 2014, and the Council conclusions of 16 March, the Stabilization and Association Agreement with BiH entered into force on 1 June 2015 following the written commitment to engage in reforms agreed by the BiH Presidency, signed by BiH political leaders and endorsed by the BiH Parliament. In the frame of the renewed European Union approach to BiH, the BiH State and Entity Governments adopted a Reform agenda for BiH 2015-2018 in July and an action plan in October. The reform agenda sets out an ambitious set of socioeconomic, rule of law and public administration reforms that will be implemented with the assistance of the European Union and the international financial institutions.

6. While progress was made on the European Union path, the twentieth commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide in July negatively affected relations within BiH and between Sarajevo and Belgrade. The arrest of Naser Oric, wartime Republic of BiH Army commander in Srebrenica, Russia's veto of the UK-proposed resolution on the genocide in Srebrenica at the United Nations Security Council, followed by a physical attack on Serbian Prime Minister Vucic during the commemoration on 11 July, demonstrated the fragility of the peace and reconciliation process in BiH and the wider region, and the use of painful wartime events for narrow political gain.

7. In the Republika Srpska, RS President Milorad Dodik proposed a referendum challenging the authority of the State-level judiciary. On 15 July the RS National Assembly decided to hold the referendum, which was immediately challenged by the Bosniak Caucus of the RS Council of Peoples, who raised a vital national interest motion before the RS Constitutional Court. In August the Court declared the case admissible. Dodik's intentions with the referendum remain unclear, and his statements are often contradictory, but his divisive rhetoric against the State institutions intensified in the reporting period.

8. Separately, during the party convention, Dodik's SNSD has proclaimed a referendum of independence, implying Dodik's separatist notions, unless "respect for the BiH constitutional structure was 're-established' by the end of 2017". While supporting the reform agenda, Dodik continued to portray State institutions as illegitimate and imposed and claimed that in order for BiH to fulfil the Written Commitment, a thorough cost-efficiency examination of State-level agencies is needed.

9. State and Entity Governments need to accelerate their efforts on pressing socioeconomic and other challenges, in consultation with the European Union. BiH is encouraged to swiftly deliver on the implementation of the necessary reforms in order to, inter alia, enable further progress in its European Union integration process. While making considerable progress, BiH continued to lag behind in the region in the reporting period.

10. In the aftermath of the devastating floods in BiH in May and August 2014, the post-disaster reconstruction efforts continued. During the reporting period, the European Union Special Representative remained engaged in promoting and leveraging the €43.5 million European Union floods recovery programme. It continued reinforcing the programme's strategic communication elements and supporting political facilitation of its implementation on the ground, coordinating actively with key domestic and international stakeholders on flood recovery-related issues. More commitment from BiH authorities would increase the efficiency and pace of the recovery process.

III. Security situation and EUFOR activities

11. The security situation in BiH was, overall, calm and stable during the reporting period, yet stability has not been entrenched. The reporting period saw no threat to the safe and secure environment, even though the attack on the Zvornik police station in April, in which an armed individual killed one policeman and injured two others, was cause for concern.

12. Some actions were taken by the political leadership to start addressing the socioeconomic problems. However, the dire socioeconomic situation remained a prime factor of concern requiring effective and sustained reform efforts. These were further aggravated by the unaddressed conflict legacy which resurfaced around the Srebrenica commemoration. In addition, divisive and secessionist rhetoric persisted in the reporting period. Social and State cohesion, as well as good neighbourly relations, were challenged on a few occasions. The root causes of the socioeconomic tensions have to be addressed to achieve long-term stability. Moreover, global challenges such as the return of foreign fighters and mixed migratory flows may in the future put additional pressure on this relatively fragile security environment and on the law enforcement agencies.

13. As regards the capacities of the BiH law enforcement agencies, while some improvements were made in response to the coordination challenges identified in February 2014, also in the area of training and equipment, shortfalls remain. There are substantial, structural and tactical issues within the police still to be solved. In particular, command and control at the strategic and operational levels remains weak and law enforcement agencies remain fragmented, uncoordinated and vulnerable to political manipulation and obstruction.

14. Operation Althea continued to implement its capacity-building and training tasks successfully while engaging in a more integrated approach with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in that area. The EUFOR Althea headquarters stood ready to support the BiH authorities' efforts to maintain the safe and secure environment. The Operation is well configured to deliver its main efforts, but continued political obstacles and shortfalls on the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) side, as well as a large amount of resources dedicated to guarding and managing an obsolete surplus of weapons and ammunition, still needed to be fully addressed for the AFBiH to entirely benefit from the capacity-building and training offer. EUFOR over-the-horizon reserve forces, shared with NATO, are still short of two battalions.

15. The AFBiH managed to increase the disposal rate of ammunition, weapons and explosives surplus and make progress in inventory, thanks partly to the support provided by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union and other partners in the international community.

IV. Outlook

16. The positive momentum on the European Union path in BiH and progress achieved so far reduced the stalemate that BiH was facing in the past years. Political in-fighting along ethnic lines, together with the repeated call for a referendum and divisive rhetoric in the RS, created headwinds to European Union efforts on the ground and will continue to burden the long-term pace and success of the reforms.

17. For this reason, the coming months, in particular the implementation of the reform agenda, will be crucial for the European Union to consider a potential BiH application for European Union membership. The reconciliation in BiH and within the region must also remain a priority.

18. The security situation in BiH was, overall, calm and stable during the reporting period; yet stability has not been entrenched. The socioeconomic environment continues to remain a serious problem, aggravated by the ineffective

disaster relief by BiH authorities in the aftermath of the 2014 floods. Moreover, global challenges such as the return of foreign fighters and mixed migratory flows may in the future put additional pressure on this relatively fragile security environment and on the law enforcement agencies. Therefore, the capacities of those agencies need to be further improved by the BiH authorities.

19. While important challenges remain, the renewed approach by the European Union should be seized in order to retain a positive political momentum.